

SENATE BILL 2496  
By Dixon

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 22, relative to maximum weight standards for textbooks.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. The general assembly finds and declares that:

(1) Backpacks of elementary and secondary school pupils often contain textbooks, workbooks, notebooks, binders, calculators, personal computers, lunches, a change of clothing, sports equipment, and more;

(2) Elementary and secondary school pupils are carrying backpacks weighing as much as fifty (50) pounds;

(3) Chiropractors, physical therapists, and pediatricians are seeing an increased number of children suffering spinal column injuries, nontraumatic back pain, and significant postural changes from overloaded backpacks;

(4) Chiropractors and pediatricians recommend that backpacks not exceed more than fifteen percent (15%) of a pupil's body weight; and

(5) In 1999, more than three thousand four hundred (3,400) pupils between five (5) and fourteen (14) years of age, inclusive, sought treatment in hospital emergency rooms for injuries related to backpacks or book bags according to the United States consumer product safety commission.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 22, is amended by adding the following as a new, appropriately designated section:

**§ 49-6-2211.** On or before July 1, 2005, the state board of education shall promulgate separate weight standards for textbooks used by pupils in elementary schools, in middle schools, and in high schools. In promulgating such standards, the

board shall give due consideration to the health risks to elementary school pupils, middle school pupils and high school pupils who must transport textbooks to and from school each day.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.